

**SOUTHEAST PICKUP TRUCK  
THANKSGIVING PLANNER  
FACT SHEET AND TALKING POINTS**



**"Buckle Up in Your Truck" This Thanksgiving Weekend  
*Up to 567 National Highway Fatalities Projected  
During Busy Thanksgiving Weekend***

**Buckle Up in Your Truck: Pickup Truck Drivers and Passengers Still at Greatest Risk**

- In 2004, there were 1,782 pickup truck occupant fatalities in crashes in the Southeastern U.S. Seventy-four percent of the pickup truck occupants killed in those crashes were not buckled up at the time of the crash.
- That is why federal, State and local law enforcement and highway safety partners in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee are joining together to launch an aggressive and extended public awareness and safety belt enforcement initiative focused on pickup drivers and the rural areas of their states.
- In 2005, observed safety belt use among pickup truck drivers and passengers was only 73 percent (compared to the 83 percent in passenger cars and 85 percent in vans and SUVs.)
- Even more alarming, the ejection rate for occupants of pickup trucks involved in fatal crashes is nearly double the rate for passenger car occupants – because pickup trucks in fatal crashes roll over twice as often as passenger cars.
- You can increase the odds of survival in a rollover crash in light trucks by nearly 80 percent by wearing a safety belt.
- Safety belt use in the Nation's rural areas consistently trails the national average, with pickup truck drivers and passengers among those least likely to buckle up.
- Only 21 percent of Americans live in rural areas of this country, but rural traffic crashes account for nearly two-thirds of the Nation's passenger vehicle occupant fatalities and more than three-fourths of all pickup truck occupant fatalities occur outside urban areas.
- The goal is simple: to save more lives by convincing pickup truck drivers and their passengers to always buckle up.

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## **Safety Belts Save Lives**

- In 2002, Motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for males and females from 3 to 33 years old.
- Safety belts are the single most effective way to protect people in vehicle crashes.
- Seventy-five percent of the passenger vehicle occupants, who were in a serious crash in 2004 and were restrained, survived the crash.
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 31,693 passenger vehicle occupants died in crashes during 2004 – and more than half of those killed were NOT wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash.
- Although national safety belt use increased to a record 82 percent in 2005 (up from 58 percent since 1994), there are still too many people who choose not to regularly wear their safety belts.
- Men – especially younger men – are much less likely to buckle up. In 2004, 67 percent of male drivers and 73 percent of male passengers between the ages of 18 and 34 who were killed in crashes were not wearing their safety belts.
- Teens and young adults, both males and females, between the ages of 16 and 24 are the age group least likely to wear their safety belts – dropping to a 77 percent belt use compared to 84 percent among boys and girls in the 8 to 15 age range.

## **“Buckle Up in Your Truck” This Thanksgiving Season**

- Many part-time safety belt users say they forget to wear their safety belts on shorter trips or when traveling close to home.
- Yet, traffic crashes can and do happen anywhere at any time –on your way to work, when driving your kids to school or when close to home.
- During the holidays, long trips far from home can be even more deadly.
- That is why law enforcement officials will be out in force this Thanksgiving weekend showing zero tolerance for those not buckled up.
- This is not about writing more tickets. It is about saving more lives.
- This Thanksgiving weekend, unless you want to risk a ticket – or worse, your life – always remember to “Buckle Up in Your Truck.”

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